

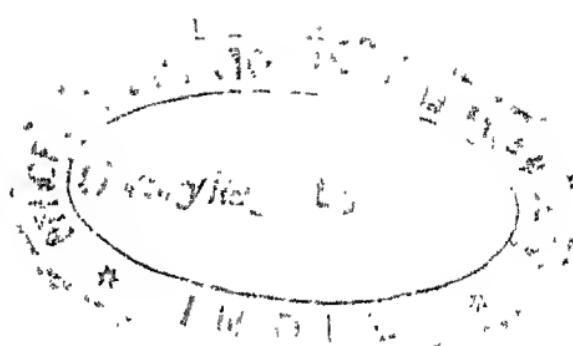
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## THE SHRINES OF SITAKUND.



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# SHRINES OF SITAKUND

IN THE DISTRICT OF

CHITTAGONG IN BENGAL

BY

ADHARLAL SEN, B. A.

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VICE-PRESIDENT OF THE ASIATIC SOCIETY OF BENGAL; AND  
REGISTRAR OF THE CALCUTTA UNIVERSITY

WHO HAS BEEN MORE THAN A FATHER TO ME.

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reverence for his genius and learning.*

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## PREFACE.

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I visited Sitakund in 1880, during the *Siva-Chaturdasi* festival. From the notes then recorded by me, I wrote a paper on the Shrines of the place, which was read before the Asiatic Society of Bengal on the 2nd March, 1881. This paper, with some additions and alterations, is now presented before the public.

It was owing to the kindness of the late Pandit Bhairava Chandra Nyayaratna of Chittagong, that I was able to obtain copies of some of the sacred writings to which reference is made in the following pages. To my old and revered tutor, Pandit Haris Chandra Kaviratna, of the Presidency College, my thanks are also due for his kindly going through the proof-sheets, and helping me with his suggestions.

A. S.

*Calcutta, June 15th, 1884.*



THE

## SHRINES OF SITAKUND.

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Sítakund is an outpost in the Police circle of Kumiria attached to the Sudder Subdivision of the district of Chittagong in Bengal. It is bounded on the east by the Sitakund range, on the west by the Bay of Bengal, on the north and south by the Kumiria and Merkaserai thanas respectively, the population by the last Census being 36,581 souls.

The city of the same name (lat.  $22^{\circ} 37' 55''$ ; long.  $91^{\circ} 43' 40''$ ), which is at a distance of 24 miles to the north of the Sudder Station, is not mentioned by name in the Ayeen Akbery; but it appears to have been a place of considerable importance at the time when Chittagong first came into the possession of the English. Mr. Harry Verelst, the first Chief of Chittagong, who afterwards succeeded Mr. Vansittart in the Governorship of Bengal, reported his arrival from this place on the 3rd January, 1761.\* Lord

\* Mr. Cotton's Memorandum on the Revenue History of Chittagong, page 5.

Teignmouth visited it in 1778,\* and Sir William Jones in 1786.† It was also inspected and described by Captain Pogson in 1831,‡ and Sir Joseph Hooker in 1854.§ Sitakund still continues to hold its position as a place of note in the district. It has a *moonsifee* of its own, which, though still going by its name, has, however, been recently removed to an adjacent place. The trade of Sitakund is not inconsiderable, lying as it does on the Grand Trunk Road between Dacca and Chittagong, which is always fit for wheeled traffic, and being accessible within a short distance by boats throughout the year. There is not certainly a more beautiful place on earth. Nature has adorned it with all that is sublime and beautiful in creation. It is a meet residence for gods. The grand mountains, the beautiful waterfalls, the volcanic springs, the clear streams, the thick forests, and their conflagrations at night, the numberless odorous flowers, the fragrant breeze and the sweet song of birds,—these no one can forget, who has once been there.

\* Lord Teignmouth's Memoirs of Sir William Jones, Vol. II, p. 55.

† Ibid. Letter from Sir William Jones to Mr. Justice Hyde.

‡ Pogson's Narrative during a Tour to Chateegaon, p. 204. The date of Pogson's visit to Sitakund, as given by the late Dr. Oldham, quoting Corbyn, in his paper on the Thermal Springs of India edited by his son, is 1778. (Vide p. 59, Part II, Vol. XIX. Memoirs of the Geological Survey of India.) But this is not correct, as will be seen from Captain Pogson's own Narrative. It was Lord Teignmouth who visited the place in 1778.

§ Hooker's Himalayan Journals, Vol. II, p. 352.

It is, however, from a religious point of view, that the place is held in the greatest esteem. In Eastern Bengal, which is condemned by the orthodox as the Mlechha country, not visited by the Pándavas (पाञ्चवर्जितदेश), there is no place so renowned as Sitakund. It is one of the 51 sacred *Pithas* (पीठ),\* on which fell scattered the limbs of Satí, the consort of Siva, whose dead body was cut to pieces by the discus of Vishnu. "On Chandrasekhara in Chittagong in Eastern Bengal," says the *Adipurána*,† "there is a place of great sanctity, which

\* चट्टले दक्षवाङ्मे भैरवस्मद्गमेष्वरः ।

अमारुपा भगवती भवानी तत्र देवता ॥

इति तत्त्वचूडामणौ शिवपार्वतीसंवादे

एकपश्चात्तद्विद्योत्ती दीप्तिनिर्णयः ।

*Vide* Sir Raja Radhakanta Deva's *Sabdakalpadruma*, Vol. III, p. 2150, and Vol. VII, p. 702 (supplement) 1st Edition.

चट्टग्रामे डानिहस्त अर्द्ध अनुभव ।

भवानी देवता चन्द्रशेखर तैरव ॥

भारतचन्द्र रायर अन्नदामङ्गल ।

प्रकृत्वारेत्र य निशा पाला ।

Date of composition of *Annaddámangala*, S. 1674=1753 A. D.

वेद लये थवि रुले बुक्त निळपिला ।

मेहि शके एই गीत भारत रळिला ॥

† देवाभिज्ञितं चेचं वज्रप्राक् चालि मैलजे ।

अतिगुह्यं महत्पुण्यं चट्टले चन्द्रगेष्वरे ॥

*Adipurána*, *Vide*. p. 105 *Chandrasekhara Málátmya*  
by Uma Charan Mookerjea.

is the favourite and secret resort of the gods." "We have heard before," the Rishis said in the *Devípurána*,\* "of Sitakund situate on the mount of Chandrasekhara, a spring known throughout India, which is the purifier of the three worlds". "Ayodhya, Muttra, Maya (Hurdwar), Benares, Kánchi (Conjeveram), Avanti (Ojjein), and Dwáráká—these seven places are the dispensers of salvation. In Benares, Maináka, Ekámra-vana (Bhubanesvara), Kailás and Sumeru, Siva constantly dwells. During the Kali Yuga," says Vishnu to his consort, in the *Váráhí Tantra*,† "Chittagong is the habitation of the gods." So again Siva said in the *Linga Purana*,‡ "I shall dwell with thee, O

\* सौताकुण्डं श्रुतं पूर्वं चैलोक्यजनपावनं ।

चन्द्रशेखरमध्यस्थं भारताख्यासमन्वितम् ॥

इति श्रीदेवीपुराणे चैवमाहात्म्ये चण्डिकाखण्डे शिवरक्षस्य-  
कथने श्रीश्रीचन्द्रशेखरप्राप्तिरक्षादग्रोध्याथः ।

† अद्योधा भयुरा भाया काशी अवन्तिका ।

पुरी द्वारावती चैव सप्तैता मुक्तिदायिकाः ॥

वाराणसी च मैनाक एकाघ्यवनमेव च ।

कैलासरजताद्रिष्य सर्णाद्रिष्ट्यपश्चका ॥

एतेषु ग्रन्थरो नित्यं वसेदेवीसमन्वितः ।

कलौ खानश्च सर्वेषां देवानां चह्लो शुभे ॥

इति श्रीवाराहीतन्त्रे श्रीनारायणनारायणीसंवादे

हतीयः पठलः ।

‡ लोकानाम् हितार्थाय वज्रस्ये चन्द्रशेखरे ।

लया सत्त्वसिद्ध्यामि सत्यं सत्यं वरानने ॥

*Linga Purana, Vide p. 105, Chandrasekhara Máhát-mya by Uma Charan Mookerjea.*

fair-faced one, on Chandrasekhara in Bengal for the good of men." The sanctity of the shrines of Sita-kund is a favourite theme with the writers of the Puranas and Tantras, and passages bearing on the subject need not be multiplied. The shrines attract pilgrims from all parts of Bengal, Behar, and Orissa, as also from the North-Western Provinces. The Siva-Chaturdasi festival, according to Dr. Hunter,\* is attended by ten to twenty thousand pilgrims. The minor gatherings, at the eclipses of the sun and moon, and at like occasions, number from two to four thousand devotees.

The leading works which treat of these shrines are (1) *Devipurana*, (2) *Váráhí Tantra*, (3) *Ghinnamastá Tantra*. Passing mention of them may also be found in the following works: *Adipurana*, *Linga Purana*, *A'di Brahma Purana*, *Churámáni Tantra*, *Yogini Tantra*, *Váyu Purana*, *Bhavishya Purana*, *Tantrasára*, and *Kálímáhátmya*. A passage "अमानाथ-स्त्रनाथस्त्रन्दयेखरपर्वते" is generally referred to the *Amarakosha*. In Colebrooke's excellent edition of the Dictionary, I searched for the passage in vain, but have succeeded in tracing it to the *Mahálingesvara Tantra* in the prayer of a hundred names addressed to Siva. The exact age, in which the aforesaid Tantras and Puranas were written, cannot be ascertained. According to Dr. Monier Williams, "if the oldest known Purana is not older than the sixth or

\* *Vide* Hunter's Statistical Account of Chittagong, p. 232.

seventh century, an earlier date can scarcely be attributed to the oldest known Tantra.”\* There is no mention of Chittagong, or of the shrines of Sitakund, either in the *Rámáyana*, or in the *Mahábhárata*. According to Dr. Hunter,† there is mention in the latter epic of Trilochana, a powerful king of Tipperah, who is supposed to have been contemporary with Yudhishtíra; but I have failed to trace it, though I came across two passages which speak of the conquest of that kingdom by Sahadeva and Karṇa.‡ We also know that the early kings of Tipperah were staunch Sivaites, and that a portion of the expenses of the Sitakund shrines is still defrayed by the Tipperah Raj.§ Dr. Hunter|| has also informed us, that “in 1512 the Tipperah General conquered Chittagong.” But when these shrines, now so cele-

\* Dr. Monier Williams's Indian Wisdom, page 504.

† Hunter's Statistical Account of Hill Tipperah, page 464.

‡ चैपुरं खवशे छला राजानमस्मितैजसम् ।

निजप्राह्म सहावाङ्गस्तरसा पौरवेश्वरम् ॥ ५८॥

इति सभापर्वणि दिग्विजयपर्वणि सहदेवदिग्विजये  
एकचिंशत्मोऽध्यायः ।

सोहनं पतनच्छैव चिपुरां कोशलां तथा ।

एतान् सर्वान् विनिर्जित्य करमादाय सर्वेषः ॥ ९ ॥

दक्षिणा दिशमास्याय कर्णी जिला सच्चारथान् ।

दक्षिण दक्षिणात्येषु योधयामास सूतजः ॥ १० ॥

इत्यारणके पर्वणि घोषयाचापर्वणि कर्णदिग्विजये  
चिपञ्चाशदधिकद्विशत्मोऽध्यायः ।

§ Baboo Kailas Chandia Sinha's Chronioles of Tipperah, p. 5.

|| Hunter's Statistical Account of Hill Tipperah, p. 465.

brated, were first established, has not yet been determined. It is remarkable that they were not visited by Hwen Thsang, the Chinese traveller, nor even by the great Chaitanya who is known to have made a pilgrimage to all the known shrines of his time. There can, however, be no doubt as to their recent establishment. Most of the shrines are supposed to have become endued with merit, only in the Kali Yuga. Among the springs mentioned by Captain Pogson in 1831, is Chandur or Chandra Kund, "said to have appeared within the last four months."\* In a list of objects of antiquarian interest issued by the Government of Bengal, it is said that the temple of Sambhunath was built about 450 years ago, and that of Bárabakunda about 400 years ago, but on what evidence I cannot say.†

Sitakund (Spring of Sita) derives its name from a spring consecrated to Sita, the deified heroine of the *Rámáyana*. The spring, however, is no longer in existence. A tradition prevails, that there was at one time a dispute between the followers of Vishnú and Siva about the possession of the spring, and that the dispute was referred for arbitration to one Kali Charan Roy, a zemindar and dewan in the

\* Captain Pogson's Narrative during a Tour to Chateegaon, p. 204.

† A List of the Objects of Antiquarian Interest in the Lower Provinces of Bengal compiled at the Bengal Secretariat under the orders of the Government of India, 1879.

local Collectorate,\* who, it is said, caused the spring to be filled up to terminate the difference. According to another account, the destruction of the spring was effected by the then Mohunta of Sitakund. The present Mohunta informed me that he had made several attempts to restore the sacred place, but that, though he had dug deep all around the site indicated by the sacred books, he could find no trace of the spring. His belief was, that there had been at the place no such spring as is described in the sacred books, and he told me as a reason for this belief, that the place in question was found devoid of all trace of bitumen which was found by him in the adjacent hot springs.†

\* Kali Charan Roy was dewan of the Chittagong Collectorate from 1785 to 1790. He was one of the farmers with whom Mr. Godwin concluded the Settlement in 1774. On the 5th January, 1786, Mr. Crofts, who at that time was Collector of Chittagong, sold his right, title, and interest in the island of Moiscal, for Rs. 40,000 to Kali Charan Roy. The latter was succeeded in the property by his widow Probhabaty, who died not till 1826. She had no children of her own, but adopted one Chundi Churn, who died in 1820, leaving a son, Shorut Chunder. Shorut being a minor, the estate came, on Probhabaty's death, under the Court of Wards. Shorut Chunder died recently, and the present zemindar is his son, Koilash Chunder. *Vide* Mr. Cotton's Memorandum on the Revenue History of Chittagong, pages 165-6, and page 223.

† When this paper was read before the Asiatic Society of Bengal, Mr. V. Ball remarked that though it may be true that there never was a hot spring in the locality mentioned, the absence of any trace of bitumen was no proof of its non-existence. *Vide* Proceedings of the Asiatic Society of Bengal for March, 1881, page 51.

Captain Pogson described Sitakund\* as "of pure limpid water," though Bárabakunda is the only spring he actually visited. He, however, subsequently obtained information of the other springs, and sent a careful person to bring a description and some bottles of water from each. The following account quoted by Captain Pogson from a *Gazetteer* is noteworthy :† "About twenty miles to the north of Islamabad is a remarkable hot well (named Seetacoond), the surface of which may be inflamed by the application of fire. Like all other remarkable phenomena of nature, it is esteemed sacred by the Hindoos, as is likewise another hot spring near to Monghir." As will presently be seen, the spring of Sitakund is described in the *Devipurana* as hot-watered and igneous, which agrees with the above extract from the *Gazetteer*. But as Sitakund is also the name of the outpost containing all the groups of springs and shrines at the locality, I think it is unsafe to conclude, that the specific spring Sitakund existed at the time when the passages above referred to were written.‡ If the

\* Captain Pogson's Narrative during a Tour to Chatecgaon, p 204.

† Ibid, page 99.

‡ The popular belief is, that the spring of Sitakund is still in existence. In his clever novel, called *Chandranath* after the god on the Chandrasekluara hill, the second edition of which appeared last year, Baboo Khottra Pal Chakravarti makes the hero visit Sitakund (p. 203) in 1266 B. S., that is, about 25 years ago. All old persons, however, who have visited the place, agree in saying that the spring has not been in existence for a much longer time. Baboo-

spring existed in 1831, at the time when Captain Pogson wrote his Narrative, it must have been destroyed in recent times. But the destruction of a spring, held in such an esteem by the Hindoos, would not have failed to attract the notice of the authorities. I am not aware of any official report regarding the destruction of the spring.

The following account is given in the *Devipurana*\* of the shrine, and of its destruction :

40-41.—The Rishis said : We have heard before of Sitakund, situate on the mount of Chandrasekhara, a spring known throughout India, which is the purifier of the three worlds. If thou hast any kindness for us, O sun of knowledge, do thou tell us of it, and thereby dispel our ignorance ; for about this people ask of us.

42-3.—The Suta replied : For the performance of kunda, and not Sitakund, is about 20 miles to the north of Chittagong.

\* वृष्य ऊचुः ।

सीताकुण्ड श्रुतं पूर्वं चिलोकजनपावनम् ।  
चन्द्रशेखरमध्यस्थं भारताखासमन्वितम् ॥ ४० ॥  
यदि तेऽस्मि छपा नाथ तद्वद ज्ञानभास्तर ।  
अस्माकमज्ञानम् द्वर लोके इच्छा यदीदर्शी ॥ ४१ ॥

स्मृत ऊवाच ।

सीताकुण्डविधानार्थं लोकानाम् पावनाय वै ।  
महागुण्ड महारम्यं तत् द्वाष्टन्तु विनिर्मितम् ॥ ४२ ॥  
वाङ्मात्राग्निविभित्त्वा निष्ठमुष्टोदकं द्विजाः ।  
आतपचायितं द्रुमैः सर्वोपवनस्त्रिभम् ॥ ४३ ॥

Sita's ablution, O twice-born ones, and for the purification of men, was made that spring, the most secret and beautiful, volcanic, deep, hot-watered, surrounded by trees as by an umbrella, forming one continuous grove.

44.—In that lake bathed Sítá, born of the Earth, with her husband and brother-in-law, and devoutly offered oblations to her favourite deity.

45.—There also bathed the lions among the twice-born, as also the chiefs of sages and Munis, who have attained perfection, dwelling to the north of it.

46.—What account shall I give of this spring, the most sanctifying of all? I shall only recount its merits: listen to me, O most excellent of the twice-born.

47.—When Ráma, debarred from accession to his father's throne, had gone to the hermitage of Sarabhangá, he went, in accordance with his direction, to a city lying towards the north-east.

यत्र सीता शृथिबीजा स्वामिना देवरेण वै ।  
 खाला तत्र छह्दे देवमिष्टं सन्तर्प्य यत्तः ॥ ४४ ॥  
 स्वानं चक्रुः द्विजव्याघ्रा सुनिष्टन्दरकाश्चथा ।  
 सिङ्गा मर्चर्षयः सन्ति तस्योत्तरनिवासिनः ॥ ४५ ॥  
 किं वक्तव्यं कुण्डितं महापुण्यविधायकम् ।  
 वक्ष्यामि तस्य माहात्म्यं पृष्ठुष्ठ्वं द्विजपुञ्जवाः ॥ ४६ ॥  
 राज्यभ्रष्टो यदा रामः शरभङ्गाश्रमं यद्यौ ।  
 मदुपदेशं धत्वा तु पूर्वोत्तरपुरीमगात् ॥ ४७ ॥

48-9.—In that city he saw a revered sage, versed in the knowledge of *Tirthas*, a veritable ocean of knowledge, long-armed, clad in yellow garments, and with matted hair. As soon as he saw him, he reverently saluted him with a meek heart, and enquired of him, “Why dost thou, O Lord, live here alone, besmeared with ashes?”

50-51.—That sage, whose whole body was besmeared with ashes, then opening his eyes, saw Rama, the holy, the eternal, the best of men, accompanied by Sita and Lakshmana, and thus addressed him :

52.—“I have heard that thou hast taken thy birth in the line of kings, only for our liberation from the dire bonds of the world.

53-4.—“How great is thy fortune, who art followed

पश्येत् पूर्वं भवावाङ्गं जटासण्डलधारिणम् ।  
 पीतवस्त्रपरीधानं तीर्थज्ञं ज्ञानसागरम् ॥ ४८ ॥  
 हृष्टा नवा च प्रच्छ भक्त्या विनयमानसः ।  
 कथमत्र स्थितं देवमह्नैतं विभूतिपरम् ॥ ४९ ॥  
 ततस्तु रक्षोल्लिखित्वा हृष्टा रामं सनातनम् ।  
 जानकौलक्षण्याभ्यान्तु पवित्रं पुरुषोत्तमम् ॥ ५० ॥  
 अवोचत रघुवरं स मुनिर्विभूतिधरः ।  
 अतं राजन्यवंशे तु जन्ममात्रप्रतिष्ठितम् ॥ ५१ ॥  
 अस्मान् पवित्रकरणे धोरसंसारवन्धनात् ।  
 भावज्ञानं मुक्तिं कुर्वन् लोके जन्म प्रकाशितम् ॥ ५२ ॥  
 इथं सौता धृथिवीजा कस्मिंस्थिच्छिवसंहिता ।  
 मुरारांधा मुक्तकेशी चापवर्गप्रदायिनौ ॥ ५३ ॥  
 यस्यानुगमिनौ देवी तस्य भाग्यं प्रतिष्ठितम् ।  
 समुद्रस्योत्तरे तौरे भारताल्लासमन्विते ॥ ५४ ॥

by this Sita, born of the Earth, with her hair unbound, the dispenser of salvation, worshipped even by Siva.

55.—“On the north side of the Indian Sea, there is a spring bearing her name, well known throughout India, which is the purifier of the three worlds. Know her not merely as thy wife. Verily she is Yoganidrā herself.

56.—“Deeds unaccomplishable by thee can easily be achieved by her; she is destined by the Fates to humiliate thy pride (to eclipse thy glory).

57-60.—“It is through my good fortune alone, O Rama, that thou hast come here with her. On the mount of Chandrasekhara, southwest of this country, was built by Siva, a spring of her name. Behold that spring, Sitakund, glowing with fire, situate on the west of Sambhunath, south of the Vayu hills, north of

अस्या नामा कुण्डमस्ति चिलोकजनपावनम् ।  
 न तव गृहिणी राम योगनिद्रेयस्मिष्यते ॥ ५५ ॥  
 तवाग्रक्यं कर्म यद्वा अनयावलीलाकृतम् ।  
 तवाभिमाने नष्टे तु विधिनैषा नियोजिता ॥ ५६ ॥  
 मम भाग्यवशाद्राम अनया समुपस्थितः ।  
 प्राचीदक्षिणयोर्मध्ये श्रीचन्द्रशेखरे गिरौ ॥ ५७ ॥  
 तत्र भर्गेण तत्रान्ना कुण्डमेकं नियोजितम् ।  
 स्थथमुपस्थिते विप्रासदायुगिरिदक्षिणे ॥ ५८ ॥  
 नाभिगज्जोन्तरे चैव फल्गुपस्थितः स्थितः ।  
 ज्योतिर्मयाधः प्रतीच्यां वाङ्वाग्निसमन्वितम् ॥ ५९ ॥  
 पश्येच तु भज्जाकुण्ड सौतानाम्ना नियोजितम् ।  
 सौता श्रीतल्युक्ता या सेयन्ते सद्वचारिणी ॥ ६० ॥

Nábhigangá, west of the Phalgu, below Jyotirmaya.  
That Sita is thy cheering consort."

61-8.—Thus speaking, the excellent sage fixed his eyes on them. Greatly wondering, Rama passed the night there with his wife and brother, and at dawn visited Chandrasekhara in the company of the well-wishing Muni who, on arriving there, went into the spring, and facing the sun chanted the two-lettered mantra.

64-66.—Then, leaving Rama at the place, there stepped into the spring Sita, the primitive energy, the revealer of the seat of Brahma, adored by Ananta and other gods, blue as a cloud, ever complacent, three-eyed, red-lipped and fair-haired, her form glowing with fire, adorned with eight hands, and surrounded with banner and chámara (yak-tail).

इत्युक्ता तं मुनिवरः परस्परं विलोकयेत् ।  
उषित्वा रजनीमेकां रामचन्द्रेऽतिविसृतः ॥ ६१ ॥  
प्रभाताद्यान्तु शर्वयाम् भाट्जायाचसन्धितः ।  
यथौ श्रीचन्द्रशेखरं मुनिना परमेष्ठिना ॥ ६२ ॥  
गला मुनिवरस्तत्र कुण्डमध्ये व्यवस्थितः ।  
स्तर्थ्याभिमुखमास्याय जपन्मन्त्रम् द्युचरम् ॥ ६३ ॥  
रामं विद्वाय सा सीता कुण्डमध्ये व्यवस्थिता ।  
नौलजीमूतसङ्काशरा भुजाष्टपरिशोभिता ॥ ६४ ॥  
केशावलम्बिनी देवी अरणाधरसङ्गिनी ।  
स्त्रीचन्द्रवयसंयुक्ता धजचासरवेष्ठिता ॥ ६५ ॥  
अवन्नादिभिराराधा ब्रह्मपौडप्रकाशिका ।  
आदिशक्तिः सुप्रसन्ना भवावाङ्वरुपिणी ॥ ६६ ॥

67.—Standing on the margin, Rama saw Sita immersed in the spring. Believing the spring to have destroyed her, dear to him as life, he addressed these words to the Munji :

68-9.—“This spring shall remain in existence for the first four thousand years of the Kali age, and shall after that time vanish from the sight of man. Whoever out of devotion will drink the water, shall obtain the same fruit as may be got by immersion, and shall not live any longer upon earth.”

‘70-71.—Saying this, the foe of Rávana went to the Mani hill. Having viewed the linga and bathed in the Lavanákhya, he gratified the sage with humble and respectful words, and then returned to Chandrasekhara.

तटस्यो राघवः पश्येत् सौतां कुण्डनिवासिनीं ।  
 मम प्राणहरं कुण्डं विभाव्य रघुवंशजाः ॥ ६७ ॥  
 सन्धाय तं मुनिवरमिदं वचनमब्रवीत् ।  
 कलेचतुःसहस्राणि वर्षाणि लक्षणायतम् ॥ ६८ ॥  
 स्थितं कुण्डं गुप्तमासौत् सानवादर्घनं भवेत् ।  
 भक्तिं छला तु सौतायाः यः कस्त्रिदा जलं पिवेत् ॥ ६९ ॥  
 कुण्डस्नानफलं प्रायं न पुनर्वर्त्तते भुवि ।  
 इत्युक्तासौ रावणार्दिष्टिपर्व्यतमूर्द्धनि ॥ ७० ॥  
 गत्वा दद्वा शिवलिङ्गं लवणाव्यौ निसज्जयन् ।  
 आगत्य चन्द्रगेहरं प्रसाद्य मुनिसौम्बरं ।  
 सनात्कृतयामास रामोऽपि विनयात्तिः ॥ ७१ ॥

72.—Then Rama, delighted, started with Sita and his brother, for the banks of the Godávarí.

According to the above account, Rama, having visited the hermitage of Sarabhanga, by his direction turned towards a north-eastern city, where another sage informed him, that on the south-west of that city, there was a sacred spring of the name of his consort Sita (Sitakund), who, he was informed to his surprise, was no other than Yoganidra herself. Rama is then said to have visited this spring in the company of his wife and brother and the learned sage. Finding Sita immersed in the spring, whether she had gone to bathe without his knowledge, Rama thought she had been drowned, and cursed the spring as the destroyer of the princess. According to the malediction which, be it observed, is not to have immediate effect, the spring would cease to be visible to human eyes, at the end of four thousand years of the fourth age. The *Chinnamastá Tantra* is, however, ready with another explanation of the origin of the shrine and of its disappearance.\* It

सीतासादाय सधाता भिन्नाङ्गनचयोपसर्म ।

जगाम परमाङ्गादः पुनर्गोदावरीं प्रति ॥ ७२ ॥

इति देवीपुराणे चैच्चामाहात्मेण चण्डिकाखण्डे शिवरहस्यकथने  
श्रीश्रीचन्द्रशेखरप्राप्तिरष्टादशोऽध्यायः ।

\* सीतानाभिसर्म द्वाष्टं पानालं द्वाष्टमुत्तमं ॥

सीतापरीच्छार्थाय तत्पूर्वेऽग्निः चचार ह ।

ततः शशाप सा सीता परीच्छानलतापिता ॥

relates that the spring was the scene of the ordeal by fire of Sita, that it was excavated by the hand of the great Hanumat, and that it was cursed by Sita herself as the site of her sufferings. The explanation itself is, however, less important than the manner of its narration. Sita is not described there merely as Yoganidrā herself, or the Primeval Sakti or Energy, and Rama the divine hero who would curb the pride of the Rakshasas. They are the veritable Supreme Duad, the spiritual guides of Siva and his consort who came over to the shrine to offer their oblations. The spiritual guide, according to Hindoo ideas, it is well known, is the embodiment of the Deity itself on earth. The recognition accordingly of Rama and Sita as the spiritual guides of Siva and his consort is significant. A tradition has been mentioned above, which attributes the filling up of the spring to a dispute between the Sivaites and Vishnuvites. It would therefore seem, that this second legend was probably written at a period of Vishnuvite supremacy.

युग्मेनाखिलं सर्वं दद्ध्वते तेन वक्तिना ।  
सौताकोपानलो यत्र कुण्डनात्र विचक्षणं ॥

\* \* \* \* \*

यत्नेन निर्मितं कुण्डं परीक्षार्थं इनूसता ।  
कुण्डपार्वचरो भूत्वा तिष्ठति इनूमान् बल्ली ॥

इति द्विद्वयमस्तुतन्त्रे महाकालीसम्बादे पार्वतीमन्तर्घहण  
स्थाननिर्णयो नाम द्वितीयः पठलः ।

However it may have been, apart from the contradictory nature of the two accounts which in itself furnishes a strong argument against their authenticity, both of them—internally incoherent and contradictory as they are—have not the impress of the high authority of Valmiki, the most ancient writer on the life and deeds of Rama, and perhaps the one, who in consequence describes them with the nearest approach to truth. It is true that a few places in the Chittagong Division bear the name of Rama, so that it might apparently seem that the prince had something or other to do with them. There is, for instance, Ramoo, where it is said Rama commenced the Setubandha bridge, but, preferring not to enter by the postern gate the capital of Ravana (to which the bridge would have led him, had he gone that way), he turned round, and constructed a separate bridge at Ramesvara to lead him to the front gate of the metropolis of Ceylon. In the *Pájál Puri* (*lit.* the nether world), in a cavern in the hill of Chandranath to which reference will presently be made, a huge stone is pointed out as the cooking utensil of Sita. Similarly, a place or two in the adjoining districts of Noakhally and the Hill Tracts, may be mentioned as bearing the name of Rama and his wife. This reason, however, does not commend itself as very conclusive. For it is a fact that may be well established by numerous instances, that the Brahmins took delight in associating shrines

with renowned names in their religious history, in order to ensure and enhance their sanctity.\* Regarding Rama alone, thus we read of the Doobrajpore rocks far off in the district of Beerbboom, consisting of stones that fell off from his aerial chariot on his return from the Himalayas, when he had gone up there to fetch stones for the construction of his bridge to Ceylon. Adjacent places are shown, as where his wife Sita sat and bathed. A boulder in the neighbourhood is also pointed out, as having been caused by Ravana's attending a call of nature.† In the same way, Rama's advent is also claimed for the province of Orissa, (wrongly identifying it with *Kishkindhyá* mentioned in the Ramayana), where the Rajah of Cuttack up to this time wears a tail in all public receptions, more as a testimony to his descent from the monkey allies of the great hero, than by way of vindication of Mr. Darwin's theory. There are

\* "The hot springs of India have attracted the notice of many observers. In the majority of instances these remarkable outbursts of water, at a temperature considerably above that of the waters, or even of the atmosphere in the neighbourhood, often charged with various gases and emitting strong odours, have been endowed by the superstitions and ignorant with wondrous virtues, or have been supposed to be the result of some miraculous interposition of divine energy." Dr Oldham on the Thermal Springs of India, page 1, Part II, Vol. XIX Memos of the Geological Survey of India.

† A List of the Objects of Antiquarian Interest in the Lower Provinces of Bengal, compiled at the Bengal Secretariat under the orders of the Government of India, pages 4-6.

several places bearing the name of King Bálí, the brother of Sugriva, who was treacherously killed by Rama; *Bálíkáti*, a river; *Bálíkánta*, also a river; *Bálisahi*, a village. There is also a festival called *Bálí Játrá*. The *Sabdakalpadruma* also mentions a hill at the place called *Kishkindhyá*.\* Against this identification—plausible as it is—is the unfortunate situation of the river Pampá (in Mysore) which Rama is said to have visited, before entering *Kishkindhyá* the kingdom of the monkeys which, it would seem, coincided nearly with the present kingdom of Mysore.

It is not improbable, therefore, that the above legends of Sitakund are another of those religio-historical forgeries so common all over India. Certain it is, that Rama's journey southwards was made through the middle of the Deccan and not through Orissa and the Coasts, much less through Chittagong and Sitakund; the following being the most important places in the hero's itinerary as described by Valmiki: the Tamasá, the Vedasruti, the Gomati, the Ganges, Batsyadesa, Prayága, Chitrakuta, the Mandákini, Dandaka, the Godavari, Krauncha, the Pampa, Rishyamuka, Kishkindhyá, and Ceylon. There is absolutely no mention, in the great epic of Valmiki, of Rama having gone so far north-eastward as Chittagong, after having visited the hermitage of Sarabhanga.

\* किञ्चिन्नः पु ओडुदेश्चापवैतविशेषः । *Sabdakalpadruma*, p. 579, Vol. I.

The narrative of this visit is contained in Canto V of Book III. When Rama was about to enter the hermitage of this sage, he saw with the Rishi, Indra the Dreaded Thunderer, in all the paraphernalia of his high office, who disappeared on Rama's nearer approach. Replying to Rama's question, the Muni said that the lord of heaven had been to his hermitage to escort him to heaven, but that the Muni could not comply with his request and leave the earth, before seeing Rama, to whom he offered all the merits of his long penance so that the prince by virtue of them might ascend to heaven. Rama, of course, declined the gift, and requested the sage to point out a meet place for his home. The following is his reply :

“ Sutíkslna's woodland home is near,  
 A glorious saint of life austere,  
 True to the path of duty ; he  
 With highest bliss will prosper thee.  
 Against the stream thy course must be  
 Of this fair brook Mandákiní,  
 Whereon light rafts like blossoms glide ;  
 Then to his cottage turn aside.  
 There lies thy path, but, ere thou go,  
 Look on me, dear one, till I throw  
 Aside this mould that girds me in  
 As casts the snake his withered skin.”\*

\* Griffith's Ramayana, Vol III, Book III, Canto V, Page 21.

On the sage giving up the ghost, the holy men who dwelt around flocked to Rama, and solicited his protection against the Rakshasas, which he readily granted. We now come to the Seventh Canto in which Rama is then made to visit this hermitage of Sutikshna. After the exchange of proper greeting, Rama said :

“ But now O saint, I pray thee tell  
 Where I within this wood may dwell,  
 For I by Sarabhanga old  
 The son of Gotama, was told  
 That thou in every lore art wise  
 And seest all with thy loving eyes.”\*

In reply to this, the sage begged Rama to take up his abode at his hermitage. Rama passed the night there. On the following morning he asked leave of the sage, and prayed for his permission to explore the Dandaka. The sage answered as follows :

“ Go with thy brother, Rama, go,  
 Pursue thy path untouched by woe :  
 Go with thy faithful Sita, she  
 Still like a shadow follows thee.  
 Roam Dandak wood observing well  
 The pleasant homes where hermits dwell,  
 Pure saints whose ordered souls adhere  
 To penance rites and vows austere.”†

\* Griffith's Ramayana, Vol. III, Book III, Canto VII, Page 28.

† Griffith's Ramayana, Vol. III, Book III, Canto VIII, Page 32.

Thus it is clear, that there is no mention whatever in the *Ramayana*, of Rama having passed through Chittagong on his way downwards to the Deccan. The geographical position itself of Chittagong and of the Godavari (to the banks of which Rama in the above legend is said to have bent his way on leaving Chittagong), renders it quite improbable. The attribution of the ordeal by fire of Sita to a hotspring is not a new idea.\* The Sitakund of Monghyr is similarly credited with being the scene of the same ordeal, which, it is scarcely necessary to say, really took place at Ceylon, if the father of Aryan poetry is to be believed. The principle of human nature which led to this religious fabrication, is not, however, inexplicable. "I think it is in Macedon," reasoned Fluellen,† "where Alexander is born. I tell you captain,—if you look in the maps of the 'orld, I warrant, you sall find in the comparisons betwixn Macedon and Monmouth, that the situations, look you, is poth like. There is a river in Macedon; and there is also moreover a river at Monmouth;

\* In p. 209, Part I, Vol. XVII of the Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal, General Cunningham mentions a spring called Sitakund in Kelat, which is nine miles from Dwara, and five from Monali. In Mr. Duncan's account of the Travels in Ceylon, of a *Frakeor namod Praan Poory* (p. 89, Vol. V of the Asiatic Researchos), it is stated that "our traveller states that leaving this tank, he proceeded on to a station called *Seetakund*, where Rama placed his wife Seeta on the occasion of his war with her ravisher Ravan."

† Shakespeare, King Henry V, Act IV, Scene VII.

it is called Wye at Monmouth; put it is out of my prains, what is the name of the other river; put it is all one, 'tis ahke as myingers is to myingers, and there is salmons in both."

It is not a little remarkable, that Sitakund, the name of a spring which, no matter whether it existed or not, now exists no longer, should (*lucus a non lucendo*) give its name to the outpost, and surpass the surrounding shrines in fame. Perhaps during a period of temporary Vishnuvite supremacy, it may have been indiscriminately used for, and may have eventually supplanted, *Panchakrośa* which, according to the sacred books, contain all the holy shrines of the place. Like the *Panchakrośi* of Benares, it stretches over 5 kroses (or 10 miles) round the village of Sitakund, being bounded\* on the east by the Mandakini, on the west by Vyasadakunda, on the south by Bárabakunda and on the north by the Champaka Forest. "This land called Panchakrośa," said Vishnu,† "is the cause of the holy Nirvana. Many a

\* पश्चिमे व्यासकुण्डच्च पश्चेऽसन्दाकिनी स्मृता ।

उत्तरे चम्पकारण्डं दक्षिणे वाङ्मैलः ॥

एतत् चेत्वं भथा प्रोक्तां पञ्चक्रोशं भवापलं ।

इति वाराहीतन्त्रे नारायणीनारायणसंवादे चम्पकेश्वर-

वर्णना नाम षष्ठः पठलः ।

† पञ्चक्रोशसिदं प्रोक्तं शिवनिर्वाणकारणं ॥

एतद्विभन्नरे सन्ति कुण्डान्यन्यानि सर्वतः ।

सुगोप्यानि प्रथलेन मम प्रीतिकराणि च ॥

*Ibid.*

spring is contained in it, most sacred and delightful to me." By far the most frequented of these shrines are Vyásakunda, Bárabakunda, Lavanákhya, and the temples of Chandranath and Sambhunath.

The following account is given in the *Devipurana*\* of the origin of the shrines of Chandranath and of Vyásakunda.

26-27.—"Do thou tell us, O chief of the Brahmins," said the Rishis, "why Siva, forsaking Kasi and Kailas, resides here in secrecy? Why he said, 'I shall dwell on the mount of Chandrasekhara in the Kali Yuga,' and why thy preceptor remains there, abandoning all else?"

28-29.—"In days of yore," the Suta replied, "seeing the three worlds animate and inanimate, pervaded by the sea of curd, and immersed in the waters of causation, the three-eyed lordly spirit created Brahmá and Vishnu for the purposes of creation.

\* खण्ड जाचुः ।

वद विप्रेन्द्र तत्सर्वं कथं गृद्गलमागनः ।  
विद्वाय काशीं कैलासं कस्मात् श्रीचन्द्रभूषणः ॥ १९ ॥  
कलौ तिष्ठामि इत्युत्तं श्रीचन्द्रशेखरे नगे ।  
कथने गुरुस्त्वैव चासेन्यत् सकलं त्यजन् ॥ २० ॥

स्तुत उवाच ।

पुरा दधिसलिलेन व्याप्तं चिभुवनं वरं ।  
कारणसलिले मध्यं ब्रह्माण्डं सच्चराचरम् ॥ २१ ॥  
हंड्वा तथाविधं सर्वं भगवान् भूतभावनः ।  
सहजे ब्रह्मविष्णूच्च दद्यन्ते चाम्बकः स्त्रयम् ॥ २२ ॥

30-31.—“Thus created, they, infatuated with vanity, considered themselves supreme, and genitor even of the womb from which they themselves had sprung. Even in his very presence they spoke slightly of him. Then the god, disappearing, became an image of light.

32-35.—“From the sky he then addressed the ignorant gods thus: ‘O lotus-born, of the thirteen lingas planted in Kási and other places, I have spoken to you of twelve. Only one I have concealed from thee. During the Kali Yuga, O lotus-born, I shall dwell there with Párvatí. There is no doubt of this. Do thou follow us thither with the never-dying gods.’ Thus saying, Siva with Umá vanished from their sight, and went to that place.

भूत्वा तौ तस्य निकटे इहङ्कारेण विसोहितौ ।  
 कृतवन्नौ स्वर्गर्भस्त्र च द्वाष्टारौ तौ बभूवतुः ॥ ३० ॥  
 ज्ञापन्नौ तस्य प्रसुखे ततः सोऽपि न दृश्यते ।  
 अन्तर्हित्वा तदा सोऽपि व्योतिर्लिङ्गं तदाभवत् ॥ ३१ ॥  
 अज्ञानवन्नौ तत् तौ च उवाच गगनस्थितः ।  
 येषु येषु च स्यानेषु मस्तिष्ठं स्यापितं सया ॥ ३२ ॥  
 चयोदशविभागेन काश्यादिषु च पद्मज ।  
 द्वादशं कथितं तुभ्यं लिङ्गमेकं जुगोप च ॥ ३३ ॥  
 कलौ तिष्ठामि तच्चैव पार्वत्या नाच संशयः ।  
 यूयं गच्छत तेष्वेव गमिष्येहङ्कु तत्र च ॥ ३४ ॥  
 गमिष्यथ ततः पश्चादमरैस्त्र पद्मज ।  
 इत्युक्तान्तर्हितः शम्भुस्त्रनागादू उमया सह ॥ ३५ ॥

36-37.—Even now the linga may be seen there, called Haragauri. The sinless place remained very secret in the first three ages. For the weal of men, the bull-drawn god dwells in the Kali Yuga in that sacred place with the never-dying ones."

Having thus premised the presence in the sacred place, of Siva and his consort, of Brahmá, Vishnu, and other gods, the story then runs as follows :

38.—Once on a time Vyasa, the son of Parás'ara, the subduer of his passions, began to practise asceticism in the company of the wise residents of *Kasi* (Benares), full of beatitude, knowing the Supreme Spirit, and wearing matted hair.

39-42.—Seeing him the son of Matsyagandhá, of unknown lineage, caste, and character, seated with

अद्यापि दृश्यते लिङ्गं हरगौरीति संज्ञकम् ।  
 तत् चियुगे चातिगुच्छं आसीनीर्थस्तु चानधं ॥ ३६ ॥  
 कल्पै प्रकाशरूपेण लोकानान्तु हिताय वै ।  
 सकलैशामरैस्तीर्थं वसन्तं (?) तं दृष्टासनम् ॥ ३७ ॥  
 एकदा व्यासदेवोऽपि काशीच्चेचनिवासिभिः ।  
 तपः कर्तुम् समारेभे पाराशर्यः परन्तपः ॥ ३८ ॥  
 महानन्दनिमग्नैस्तीर्जटासण्डलधारिभिः ।  
 तपसा धौतकलुषैः ब्रह्मविद्धिविवेकिभिः ॥ ३९ ॥  
 शिवज्ञानाभ्युभिः सर्वं लावितं जङ्गमादिकम् ।  
 हृष्टा तैस्तु महाप्राज्ञं नारायणमिवापरम् ॥ ४० ॥  
 जातिशौलविद्वौनं तं मत्यगम्भात्मजं शुचिं ।  
 एकासनसमायातम् एकचेच-निवासिनम् ॥ ४१ ॥  
 कुलहौनं छामं तच्च मुग्नीनामिव तिलकम् ।  
 क्रियते च तदा कोपो व्यासाय चेचवासिभिः ॥ ४२ ॥

themselves on the same seat, and dwelling in the same holy place, although he was very wise, the ornament of the sages, like unto Vishnu himself, the ire of the holy dwellers was roused against Vyasa.

43-44.—Full of jealousy, Bhrigu addressed to him the following words : “ Who art thou ? Whence dost thou come ? Whose son and of what family art thou ? Where didst thou formerly dwell ? Speak the truth.”

45-46.—Vyasa replied : “ I am the son of Parasara by Matsyagandhá. I have come here to see you, and to worship the god Visvanath. I would dwell with you, O sages of good actions. Let a seat amongst you be granted to me.”

47-48.—While he was thus speaking, Vyasa was interrupted by Bhrigu with these angry and unseemly words : “ Hear, O ye Munis, the account of his

ततो भगुपतिस्तान्तु त्रोवाचेयायुतं वचः ॥ ४६ ॥

भगुर्वाच ।

कस्त्वम् कुत इहायातः कस्य स्तनुः कुलच्च किम् ।

कस्मिन्निवसति पूर्वं वद सत्यं वचस्य नः ॥ ४४ ॥

वास उवाच ।

पराशरसुतोऽच्चम् वै मत्स्यगन्धोदरोऽङ्गवः ।

युधान् द्रष्टुम् इहायातो विश्वनाथस्य सेवया ॥ ४५ ॥

युधान्मिसु सहावासं करोमि मुनिपङ्कवाः ।

साधुमिः कातकर्मभिदीयर्ता स्थितिरूपमा ॥ ४६ ॥

इत्येवं वाच्यमानसु वचोमिलु समन्वितैः ।

निरस्तो भगुणा वासः कामक्रोधविवर्जितिः ॥ ४७ ॥

मत्स्यगन्धासुतस्वं हि शृणु वाचः कुलोजुकितः ।

शृणुष्वं मुनयः सर्वे अस्य जन्मप्रकौर्तनम् ॥ ४८ ॥

birth, and thou too, the son of Matsyagandhá, the disgrace of thy family, listen to my words.

49-53.—“While thy mother, begotten of a fish and with a fishy smell, was a ferry-woman in the Jumna, Parasara one day came to the bank of the river and entered her boat. To the Muni’s sight she immediately appeared to be endowed with beauty and grace, breathing perfume, a soul-ravishing maid of sixteen. Seeing her, the Muni became full of desire. Thou art the offspring of this union, and art neither a Kunda, nor a Golaka. How canst thou presume to practise asceticism with us? Go to thy own proper place. Thou shouldst not tarry here for a moment.”

54-56.—Hearing these insulting words, Vyasa, the son of Satyavati and Parasara, being irate, thought of sacrificing himself to Siva (thus making Siva

यदा ते जननी चासीत् यसुनायां चर्पेश्वरी ।  
 मीनजातात् गन्धयुता तरणीगृहीता सती ॥ ४६ ॥  
 दैवात् पराशरस्त्वच चागत्य यसुनातर्दं ।  
 आरुद्धा तरणीं तस्याः सुनेहर्षेनतः चणात् ॥ ५० ॥  
 सुमध्या सुरसा सन्ति बभ्रातिमनोरमा ।  
 सुगन्धा षोडशराब्दीया रूपलावण्यसंयुता ॥ ५१ ॥  
 दद्वा तां सच्च कामान्त्री रत्निमग्नः क्षतस्थाया ।  
 तत्रोद्भवोऽसि सः प्राज्ञः न कुण्डः न च गोलकः ॥ ५२ ॥  
 योऽस्माभिस्त्वं तपः कर्तुम् शक्नोसि कथमत्र च ।  
 गन्धं तव स्वस्थानं न स्येयं चणमत्र च ॥ ५३ ॥  
 शुल्का पराशरसुतो वचस्तदात्मनिन्दकम् ।  
 वधं ग्निवाध दास्यानि चेतसीदम् विभाय च ॥ ५४ ॥

guilty of his death), and said, "O vile and false Siva, holder of the trident, blue-throated, and hide-garmented, why dost thou appear *Asiva* or inauspicious to me? Why dost thou harass me so often? This very day I will leave this place."

57.—When he the subduer of his passions was so minded, the bull-drawn and blue-throated god made himself manifest to him the chief of the wise men, and spoke as follows :

58-60.—" Certes thou art a portion of mine, O subduer of thy passions, and learned in the cause of things. There is a seat of mine on Mount Chandrasekhara, very secret, and unattainable even by the gods. There in Chandrasekhara I will always reside in the Kali Yuga with Uma.

अहो शिवाग्निवं मे च वर्तते शूलधक पुनः ।  
 कथं विड्ग्ननं मे ते नीलकण्ठाजिनाम्बर ॥ ५५ ॥  
 इतो गच्छामि अद्यैव पामराज्ञानवद्धक ।  
 अमर्षाविद्य इत्युक्ता वासः सत्यवतीसुतः ॥ ५६ ॥  
 चेचाद्विद्यदा गन्तुम् भनस्क्रो परन्तपः ।  
 तदा दृषासनः साक्षादभवत् तस्य पूर्वतः ॥ ५७ ॥  
 उवाच तं ज्ञानिवरं नीलकण्ठो दृषध्वजः ।  
 न सन्देहो भद्रंशस्त्रम् शृणु वाचं परन्तप ॥ ५८ ॥  
 चेचं भेदस्त्रीच गुह्यं तत् देवानामपि दुर्ज्ञभम् ।  
 महारम्यं महागुह्यं श्रीचन्द्रशेखरं सुने ॥ ५९ ॥  
 देवाभिलिपितं चेचं क्षाग्निकोणेऽसि तत्त्ववित् ।  
 सदा कलौ च स्वास्थ्यामि उमया चन्द्रशेखरे ॥ ६० ॥

61-68.—“ Know, O Sage, that Chandrasekhara surpasses all other sacred places. It is covered on all sides with branches of trees, which protect it from the sun and rain. The *kokilas* sing there with sweet voice. In the recesses of the forest dwell the sages, their looks probing the Inmost Cause of the universe; Brahmá and other gods bathe there day and night; and in the hermitages dwell the Rishis, Yakshas, Gandharvas, and Bhairavas. In that forest are trees with flowers and fruits of the six seasons. The forest itself is in one place very deep and secret, and in another place rocky, like the moon half-eclipsed. On the south-west of the forest, O subduer of thy passions, is the Sindhu (the Ocean), the King of all *tirthas*, to whose embrace the sacred

सर्वचेताधिकं विद्धि श्रीचन्द्रशेखरं मुने ।  
 सर्वतो द्रुमशाखाभिष्क्षादितं वारितातपं ॥ ६१ ॥  
 वनप्रियादिभिसत्र कूजितं भधुरैः स्वरैः ।  
 ज्ञानिभिसत्त्वदृष्टैश्च खोयते गहनान्तरे ॥ ६२ ॥  
 यत्र ब्रह्मादिभिसत्र स्वानं चक्रो अहर्निशं ।  
 कृष्णस्य सगम्भवा यत्तात्प भैरवास्तथा ॥ ६३ ॥  
 सिद्धा महर्षयो यत्र नित्यमासन् तदाश्रमे ।  
 षड्कृतु-फलपुष्पाद्यैः पादपाः सन्ति तद्वने ॥ ६४ ॥  
 अप्रकाशस्त्रातिगृह्णां वनं सर्वर्तुर्शोभनं ।  
 अन्ये नगविशेषे यत् प्रत्यासद्वाद्वचन्द्रवत् ॥ ६५ ॥  
 तस्य दक्षिणतः सिन्धुस्त्रीर्थराजः परन्नप ।  
 यस्य संसर्गमायाता गङ्गा भागीरथी द्विज ॥ ६६ ॥  
 यथा हिमाद्रिस्त्र्याथ्यः तथा श्रीचन्द्रशेखरः ।  
 श्रीचन्द्रशेखरे देवैः सदा स्वास्थामि चे मुने ॥ ६७ ॥

Ganga offers herself, led by Bhagiratha. As the Himalaya is dear to me, so is Chandrasekhara. There shall I, O Muni, dwell with the gods."

Thus instructing Vyasa, the god then made himself manifest to him in his own proper form which is described at length in the text.

74-78.—“In his own form, O Munis, he then said to Vyasa: “Go there, O most excellent of sages, subduer of thy passions, where I shall dwell with Uma. Thou shalt attain all thy desires; have no doubt about thy success. That seat of mine is the giver of health and wealth, and after death, of salvation. There also dwells the rice-giving Annapurna, delighting in rice and nectar. In this seat of perfection shall I dwell, the lord of Parvati.” Saying this to the Muni, the god disappeared.

कलोपदेशं तस्मै च स बभूव परन्नपः ।  
 शुद्धस्फटिककुम्हन्दुप्रतिमः कुण्डलोच्यलः ॥ ७८ ॥

\* \* \* \* \* \* \* \* \*

रत्नैः रूपविशेषैः भगवानुमया सत्त्वं ।  
 वसासि तत्र इत्युक्तं व्यासाय सुनिपुण्यवाः ॥ ७४ ॥

तत्र गच्छ मुनिश्चष्ट मस्तिष्ठाप्ते परन्नप ।  
 उदाभीष्टं प्राप्युचि चेत् सत्यं सिद्धिर्न संशयः ॥ ७५ ॥

मत्त्वेचं शिवदं खस्त्रमन्ते च मोक्षदायकम् ।  
 अज्ञपूर्णा निवसति उदाद्रूपधारिणी ॥ ७६ ॥

तत्र च तुलसमासे चेदमद्राचाविलासिनी ।  
 इवमूर्त्तं सिद्धपौष्टे वसन्तम् (?) पार्वतीप्रतिम् ॥ ७७ ॥

इत्युक्तानार्दधे शक्तु मन्त्रे ज्ञानमार्क्षिने ॥ ७८ ॥

79-81.—As Nárada had ascended the Sríśaila hill; even so went Vyasa, the son of Satyavati, to Chandra-sekhara, hearing these words of Siva. There he began to practise asceticism, his mind always concentrated in meditation, repeating the five-lettered mantra, sometimes covered with snow, sometimes near a fire, sometimes fasting altogether, absorbed in Pránáyáma, all his thoughts devoted to the meditation on god.

82.—Pleased at seeing him so devoted, the Self-created then appeared to him. "Ask for a boon," he said, "O subduer of thy passions."

83-85.—Having heard this, Vyasa then replied with folded hands—"When the Munis residing at Kasi spoke scornfully to me, it was by thy command O Lord, that I came here. Dwell thou here, as was thy command while in Kasi. This is the dear boon that I ask of thee."

ततः सत्यवत्तौद्धनुः श्रुत्वा वाक्यं चरस्य तु ।  
 यथौ श्रीचन्द्रेश्वरं श्रीशैले नारदो यथा ॥ ७९ ॥  
 गत्वा तपः समारेभे सदा च ध्यानमानसः ।  
 हिमजालदृष्टः क्वचिद्भुताश्नसमीपतः ॥ ८० ॥  
 निराहारः कदा ग्रेवे तद्वावभावनागतः ।  
 प्राणायामगतः क्वचित् पञ्चाचरमनुं जपन् ॥ ८१ ॥  
 दद्वा तपोरत्मेव स्वयम्भुर्षमागतः ।  
 भूत्वा प्रत्यक्षमवदत् वरं गृह्ण परन्तप ॥ ८२ ॥  
 तत् श्रुत्वा भगवान् व्यासः क्वाञ्छलिपुटोऽवैत् ।  
 गर्हितं मे यदा देव मुनिभिः काशीवासिभिः ॥ ८३ ॥  
 तवैपदेशाद् गन्ध्यमचैकेन सद्य विभो ॥ ८४ ॥  
 क्वतं यथोपदेशं मे काशीस्त्रेन सहायना ।

86-87.—“ Do thou, O sage,” the god answered, “ remain on the mount Chandrasekhara near the ocean, as the guardian deity of this holy place, and make thyself the saviour of the three worlds by planting over it all the *tirthas*, such as Gaya and others, that exist on the face of the earth. May all thy desires be successful.”

88-89.—With these words, the god, while yet in the presence of Vyasa, pierced the earth with his trident. Then there arose a spring full of water, with igneous brilliance in the interior, and covered with smoke.

90-93.—Delighted at this sight, Vyasa assumed the

तथा भवात्र गिरिश देहि चैवं वरं सुहृत् ॥ ८५ ॥  
 समस्तौर्ध्वस्त्रात्र तीर्थाधिष्ठितविग्रहः ।  
 तिष्ठ सिभुसमीये च श्रीचन्द्रशेखरे मुने ॥ ८६ ॥  
 गयादीनीह तीर्थानि यानि सन्नीह भूतले ।  
 तान्यच खापयित्वा तु चैलोक्यतारणं कुरु ॥ ८७ ॥  
 सिद्धिर्भवतु तेजोद्दीपा इत्युक्तासे कपानिधिः ।  
 स तस्य पश्यतः शशः चिशूले न विखन्यते ॥ ८८ ॥  
 चैतपि कुण्डाक्तिर्भूत्वा वारिपूर्णा बभूव ह ।  
 नस्यान्तरेऽग्निना दीप्तिः क्रियते धूमवेष्टितः ॥ ८९ ॥  
 हड्डानन्दगतो व्यासस्य पश्यिमतः स्वयम् ।  
 परं ध्यानगतस्यासे छब्बा पाषाणविग्रहम् ॥ ९० ॥  
 हिमुजसुपत्रौतश्च जटामण्डलधारिणं ।  
 चर्माम्बरपत्रीधानं कवीन्द्रै चेवितं स्वयम् ॥ ९१ ॥  
 यस्य भाषाख्यिलमिदस् वेदसार्गस्थितं जगत् ।  
 वेदागम-महासिंहं निर्मय ज्ञानदण्डकैः ॥ ९२ ॥  
 पुनातु स तु चैलोक्यं धर्माधर्मप्रकाशकः ॥ ९३ ॥  
 इति देवीपुराणे चैचमाहमेव स्वयम्भुरहस्यकथने चण्डिकाखण्डे  
 समदर्शोऽध्यायः ।

form of stone, and became absorbed in meditation on its west side. Even now he may be seen there, two-handed, wearing the sacred thread, and clotted hair, clothed in deer-skin, the expositor of virtue and vice, who, churning the ocean of Vedic literature with the rod of his knowledge, for the first time explained the whole universe according to the dictum of the Vedas. Let him purify the world."

Such was the origin of the shrine of Chandranath and of Vyasakunda. As in the legend of Sitakund the spring is to vanish from human sight at the end of four thousand years of the Kali Yuga, so in this legend also the shrines are to be manifest to human eyes at the commencement of the same Yuga. In both cases, great names in history have been brought forward to father the foundation of the shrines. Rama, it is known, is the deified hero of the Ramayana. Vyasa, according to the late Mr. Sherring,\* has two or three temples dedicated to him in Benares; but he is not generally considered to be a deified hero. Nevertheless, no name is so distinguished in the whole field of Indian history as the name of this sage. To him is ascribed the compilation of the Vedas and Puranas. To him is attributed the fatherhood of the fathers of the Kauravas and the Pándavas. It is no wonder, therefore, that the sage should have been made to

\* Sherring's Sacred City of the Hindus, p. 118.

play the part that he has been made to play in the foregoing passage. This, however, is not the first time, that he has been credited with the ambition of founding a shrine. The *Annadámangala* relates a like attempt on his part. Expelled by Siva from Kaśi (Benares), Vyasa began to practise extremely mortifying austerities, in the hope of raising a shrine that would, in every respect, surpass the Kaśi of Siva. He had well nigh succeeded in his object, when Uma, Siva's consort, one day appeared before him in the guise of an old, deaf, and decrepit woman, and asked him what merit a man would acquire by dying at his *tírtha*. Vyasa replied that the man would obtain salvation. But still the old woman pretended not to have heard his answer, and repeated the question again and again. Vexed at this, Vyasa said that the man would become an ass, who died there. Siva's consort, then assuming her own form, said "so be it," and vanished from the place.\* The later attempt of Vyasa to found a *tírtha* in Chittagong appears to have been more successful. He not only succeeds in conciliating Siva, but also obtains from him the much-desired boon. "Do thou, O sage," the god is made to have said, "remain on

\* ଡାକିଯା କହିଲା କ୍ରୋଧେ କାଗେର କୁହରେ ।  
ଗନ୍ଧଭ ହିବେ ବୁଡ଼ୀ ଏଥାମେ ସେ ଘରେ ॥  
ବୁଦ୍ଧିନୁ ବୁଦ୍ଧିନୁ ବଲି କରେ ଢାକି କାଗ ।  
ତଥାକୁ ବଲିଯା ଦେବୀ କୈଲା ଅନ୍ଧର୍ଦ୍ଧାନ ॥

*Annadámangala*, p. 158. This legend is based on the *Kasikhanda* of the *Skanda Purana*.

the mount Chandrasekhara near the ocean, as the guardian deity of this holy place, and make thyself the saviour of the three worlds by planting over it all the *tirthas*, such as Gaya and others, that exist on the face of the earth. May all thy desires be successful."

The pilgrim to the shrines of Sitakund generally takes up his quarters at the lodging-houses of the *Adhikaris*, a class of Brahmins, who send out emissaries called *Pándás* to almost every district of the Lower Provinces, in order to persuade people to undertake a pilgrimage to these shrines. These *Pándás* serve as guides to the pilgrims, and, in the shape of remuneration, get from the *Adhikaris* their passage-money as well as a portion, generally the fourth part, of their eventual gain; for the *Adhikaris*, besides the rent of the lodging-houses, also receive whatever the pilgrim offers to the gods, clothes, cows, horses, palkis, silver and gold ornaments,—the *kar* or the visiting cess, which consists of eight annas only under the District Magistrate's orders, being paid to the *Mohunta* for the maintenance of the shrines. The earnings of the *Adhikaris* average Rs. 5,000, and sometimes rise to Rs. 10,000. They have now-a-days found competitors in people of other castes, who also have set up lodging-houses of their own. The most opulent *Adhikaris* are Ramahari *Adhikari*, Chandrasekhara *Adhikari*, Gopinath *Adhikari*, and Akhil Chandra *Adhikari*. Hinduism is, however, at a discount in Chittagong.

The few Brahmins that may be found there, are certainly not the ornaments of the learned class. Some excellent rules were framed by Mr. Kirkwood, lately Magistrate of Chittagong, for the construction and ventilation of the lodging-houses. These, together with a hospital erected near the local bazar, have served to prevent the spread of disease which, in former days, used to originate and spread around, from the large concourse of people that assembled at the *melas*. The *Adhikaris* have now to take out licenses from the Magistrate to lodge pilgrims, which are refused, if their lodging-houses do not conform with the prescribed rules.

Settling himself in one of these lodging-houses, the pilgrim proceeds to bathe in the *Vyásakunda* referred to above. This is a small tank, 120 × 90 hands, full of mud and shrubs, the water being so impure that one would abhor the touch of it. I was informed that, small as the tank was, it was believed that no one could swim across it, or throw a stone from one side of it to the other. After bathing in the *Kunda* which, however, does not indicate any signs of being of an igneous nature as related in the legend translated above, the pilgrim makes offerings to the *Bata* (*Ficus Indica*) tree, underneath which Vyasa is said to have performed the *Asvamedha* sacrifice.\* This tree

\* वटसमीपतः ।

थचास्मेधमकरोद्दिभिर्वैद्वरायणः ॥

इति श्रीवाराहौतन्ते श्रीनारायणीनारायणसंवादे  
बतौद्यः पठलः ।

represents the primeval Bata tree, under which the great Vishnu rested before the creation. It serves as the veritable "door-keeper" of the god Chandranath, and is the presiding deity of the plain below.\* It is said never to grow old, and to flower in all seasons for the worship of the god. The pilgrim throws upon the tree-deity clods of earth, of which it is said to be very fond, and circumambulates it. The temple of Vyasa is pointed out, lying on the margin of the spring in a very dilapidated state.

Thence the pilgrim proceeds to the temple of *S'ambhunāth*, or *Svayambhunāth*, the Self-created Lord. As you proceed, the mount Chandrasekhara appears before you in full majesty. You feel a presence. No wonder that they said that the gods resided there. Are the Munis still meditating there on God, under the tall pine-trees? Are the gods and nymphs disporting themselves on the hillocks? All the old Hindu associations force themselves on you despite your Western education. The feeling, however, fades away, when you come to the site of the Sítakund mentioned above. According to the *Varahi Tantra*† there are five Kundas at this place called

\* ऊँ वटकः अतिदक्ष्य नन्दीश्चेचनाथकः ।

निर्विघ्नं कुरु देवेश पञ्चलोऽप्रियः सदा ॥

वटुनाम्नो महाषट्कः ईश्वरद्वारपालकः ।

इति श्रीवाराहीतन्त्रे श्रीनारायणीनारायणसंवादे  
त्रैतीयः पट्टकः ।

† ततः पूर्वपथाष्टया वायुपूर्वतसन्निधौ ।

समीपे विष्णुदेवस्य क्रामदीशस्य पस्तिमे ॥

*Sítakunda, Rámakunda, Lakshmanakunda, Brishakunda and Nábhikunda.* Sítakund, as related above, is no longer in existence. Small holes are, however, pointed out as the other Kundas. Near them, in an old temple are the images of Ráma, Sítá, and Lakshmana. These are stone figures, very awkwardly done, unlike the graceful idols of Calcutta.

*Jyotirmaya* consists of flickering tongues of volcanic flames in the right side of the ascent to the temple of Sambhunath. The flames, it is said, disappear altogether at the touch of the impious. When we visited Jyotirmaya, we found that it had been completely put out; and it was not till the Mohunta of Sitakund, who was acting as our cicerone, brought another light in contact with it, that the tongues could be lighted again. It is said that the flames move about from place to place, sometimes appearing in the temple of Sambhunath, sometimes in other places, and at times burn a whole forest.

पञ्चकुण्डान्वितं स्थानं परमं ब्रह्मदायकम् ।  
 दृष्टकुण्डं प्ररं यस्य प्राग् ज्योतीश्वरात्मकम् ॥  
 ततः ब्रह्माद्यः सुराः नित्यं तिष्ठन्ति चानधे ।  
 पातालादुत्थिता देवौ गङ्गा तत्पूर्वतः क्रमात् ॥  
 तञ्जलं स्यार्णनादेवि सर्वपापान् प्रमुच्यते ।  
 तस्यीनरदेशस्य नाभिकुण्डं मनोहरम् ॥  
 तस्यीनरसमस्तुचार्यां (?) रामकुण्डं मनोहरम् ।  
 लक्षणस्य तथोदीच्या सीताद्याः कुण्डसुप्रसमम् ॥  
 इति श्रीवाराचौतन्त्रे श्रीनारायणनारायणौ-  
 सवादे चतुर्थः पठलः ।

The Mohunta told us that, on one occasion when he was coming down from the temple of Chandranath, he was overtaken and scorched by the flames which suddenly appeared in great force, on the way between him and the temple of Sambhunath. When we visited Chandrasekhara, we found that a considerable portion of the forest on both sides of our way, had been recently burnt down by the fire. Some portion or other of the range of mountains always exhibits traces of the flames. At night, we witnessed an extensive conflagration on a distant hillock. Lord Teignmouth was probably referring to Jyotirmaya, when he wrote the following: "On the side of a hill distant about three miles from the burning well (Barabakunda), there is a spot of ground, of a few feet only in dimensions, from which flashes of fire burst on stamping strongly with the foot. The appearance of this spot resembled that of earth on which a fire had been kindled. I do not recollect whether it was hot to the touch."\*

The linga *Sambhunath*, the self-created lord, is said to form part of the body of the hill. A tradition is told that one of the kings of Tipperah made great endeavours to dig it out from the shrine, in order to carry it over to his capital, but without success. He was directed, it is added, by the god to content himself with the goddess *Tripurásundari*, whom he accordingly took over to his kingdom.

\* Lord Teignmouth's *Memoirs of Sir William Jones*, Vol II. p. 56.

In the history of Tipperah written by Baboo Kailas Chandra Sinha,\* we certainly read of king Kumára having gone to visit a linga in Syámalanagar, which the historian considers to be identical with Chittagong. We also read of his grandson king Taksharao, who was a devout worshipper of Siva, but had failed to obtain a son through the influence of the god, having wounded the god in his feet. Offended at this treatment, the god is said to have left Tipperah. But it is also related that king Taksharao then propitiated the irate god with a human sacrifice, and got two sons by his influence. It is not impossible, that this statement may have connexion with the attempt to transplant the linga Sambhunáth; but an old officer belonging to the Chittagong Collectorate informed me, that the belief that the linga formed part of the body of the mount, was groundless,—it being a movable stone having artificially imprinted on it in wax the marks of natural lingahood†—and that the temple was purposely kept dark to avoid detection. Mr. Caspersz, the Assistant Magistrate, who was deputed in 1879 to superintend the *Siva Chaturdasi* mela, proposed

\* Babu Kailas Chandra Sinha's Chronicles of Tipperah, p. 5.

† नानाच्छिद्दसमायुक्तं नानाबर्णसमन्वितम् ।

चदृष्टमूलं यज्ञिङ्गं कर्कशं भुवि दृश्यते ।

तज्जिङ्गनु खथम्भूतमपरं लच्छणच्छुतम् ॥

इति सिद्धान्तशेखरः ।

Vide p. 257 of the Pránatoshini.

to the District Magistrate the opening of an aperture in the dome, to serve as a skylight which would prevent people from looking in, as well as give light and air. The well-meant suggestion could not, I believe, be carried out, as it was necessary to avoid what might have been misunderstood as uncalled for interference on the part of Government. The temple of Sambhunáth was erected down below in the plateau of the hill, as the ascent to that of Chandranath is not practicable throughout the year, especially in the rainy season which is somewhat long in that part of the country, owing to its being hilly. It consists of two apartments. In the outer apartment are the Bhairava, Rama, Sita, Lakshmana, Hanumat, Annapurná and others. The presiding deity is in the inner apartment, and is of course, very superior. "The sight of the face of Kramadísa (another name of Sambhunáth) saves one from future birth."\* The linga is of a cylindrical form, about four inches in diameter, and rising about five inches from a cone, the base of which has been walled around.

In the court-yard of the main temple of Sambhunáth are many minor shrines crumbling to decay. There is a temple of *Káli*, the dread consort of

\* क्रमदीमसुखं दद्वा पुनर्जन्म न विच्यते ।

इति श्रीदाराहौतन्ते नारायणौनारायणसंवादे

चन्द्रशेखरवर्णना नाम घष्टः पठलः ।

Siva; a mandir of *Jagannáth*, and *Rádhá Krishna*; and mount *Govardhana* so well known in Brindávana. Close by are the eight Bhairavas, and the burial places of some of the Mohuntas of Sitakund. On the left, after passing Sambhunáth, is a sacred spring with *pucca* sides called *Gyákunda*,—which is considered equal in merit to the famous shrine at Gaya,—where the pilgrim shaves and bathes, and offers oblations to the manes of his ancestors. Proceeding upwards, the path becomes a mere track, with no attempt at being a regular road such as leads up to Sambhunáth. We now come to the base of mount *Chandrasekhara*. The grand staircase—consisting of about 575 steps, and generally supposed to have been built by one of the kings of Tipperah,—which brings the pilgrim to the temple of *Chandranáth* at the top of the Chandrasekhara hill, is giving way a little here and there; and unless repaired in time, will render the ascent more difficult in future than in the days before their construction. Chandrasekhara\* is the highest peak in Chittagong, being 1155 feet in height, and is situate in the centre of the Sitakund range which, commencing from the

\* *Chandranáth* is the name of the god. The peak is called Chandrasekhara. It is also sometimes called *Chandranáth*. Dr. Hunter also calls it *Chandinath*. Although *Chandinath* is another name of Siva, I have never heard the hill called by that name. It is, however, usual to use *Chandranath* and *Sitakund* as synonymous terms.

northern end of the Sudder station of the district, runs without interruption to Tipperah, parallel to the Grand Trunk Road. In the *Nirvána-tantra*\* it is mentioned as one of the *Kulaparvatas* or principal mountains of India. Wilson in his Dictionary erroneously places it in Arracan. "In the hill of Sita-kund there is a stone of two descriptions, one apparently of volcanic formation, and porous, the other solid containing iron." The hill is "formed of a stratum inclined at an angle of 80° north-east and south-west, of hard clay in places; and in others of sandstone. The surface is generally covered with loam, but on the southern slopes of all the outskirting hills, it is red sandstone or sand."† The original temple on this peak, built by a king of Tipperah, fell down in the cyclone of 1848, when the present structure, which is of smaller dimensions, was erected by Ram Sundar Sen, a rich merchant, who has since fallen from his high estate. The temple has little pretensions to artistic beauty. But the view around the peak was exceedingly beautiful. A ship that was sailing far off in the Bay of Bengal, appeared like a bird slowly flying on the horizon. The

\* नीलाचलं मन्दरस्त्रं पर्वतं चन्द्रगेखरम् ।  
 हिमालयं सुवेलस्त्रं मलयं भस्मपर्वतम् ।  
 चतुष्कोणे वसेद्विव एतत् सप्तकुलाचलम् ॥  
 इति निर्वाणतन्त्रे सर्वतन्त्रोत्तमोत्तमे चरगौरी-  
 संवादे योगविवरणं नाम चतुर्थः पटलः ।

† Statistics of the Lower Provinces of Bengal for 1868-69, p. 25

ascent of the hill itself, it is said, gives salvation.\* The god, however, is an ordinary linga. Sitakund was, as stated before, visited by Sir Joseph Hooker. The following is an extract from the account given by him in page 352 of Vol. II of his Himalayan Journals: "The road to the top of Seetakund leads along a most beautiful valley, and then winds up a cliff that is in many places almost precipitous, the ascent being partly by steps cut in the rock of which there are 560 (?). The mountain is very sacred, and there is a large Brahmin temple on its flank; and near the base a perpetual flame bursts out of the rock. This we were anxious to examine, and were extremely disappointed to find it a small vertical hole in a slaty rock, with a lateral one below for a draught, and that it is daily supplied by pious pilgrims and Brahmins with such enormous quantities of ghee (liquid butter), that it is to all intents and purposes an artificial lamp; no trace of natural phenomena being discoverable." I do not know to what flame Dr. Hooker thus alludes. Jyotirmaya is at the foot of the hill, and is also visited by pious pilgrims. But there can be no doubt that it is a natural phenomenon.

In order to visit *Virupáksha*, a phallic symbol of

\* श्रीचन्द्रमेखरारोहे मुक्तिमान्नेनि मानवः ॥  
इति श्रीवाराहीतन्त्रे नारायणीनारायणसंवादे  
चन्द्रमेखरवर्णना नाम षष्ठः पठलः ।

Siva (similar to Chandranath and Sambhunath, mentioned above), in a temple situated midway down the descent from Chandrasekhara, the pilgrim descends by a north-east route. Many proceed to Chandranath after visiting Virupáksha. The ascent to this temple from the foot of the mountain is not a pleasant affair. Sometimes you have to take a long leap, holding in your hand the frail root of an old tree. If it gives way, you are at once precipitated into the abyss below, which seems unfathomable. On his way to Chandranath from Virupaksha, the pilgrim visits *Unakoti Sivalinga* in a picturesque spot called *Pátála Puri*, or the nether world, covered with green foliage, and full of the beauties of nature. The undulations in the rocky surface of the cave, drenched with water issuing from the sides of it, are pointed out as *Unakotí* or 99 lacs of Sivas. What Mr. Sherring said of its prototype in Benares applies to this: "The actual number cut out on the superficies of the stone is not more than a few hundred; but the Hindoos are not particular in their definition of numbers."\* Descending from Virupáksha, we meet the former road again at the *Mandákiní*. This stream is considered to be identical with the river in heaven of the same name. It is said that the Ganges on starting from the Himálaya divided itself into three streams, one running through heaven called *Mandakiní*, another

\* Sherring's Sacred City of the Hindoos, p. 100.

flowing on earth called Gangá, and the third Bhoga-vatí, which is in the nether world. The water of the stream is certainly very clear, cool, and sweet.

Of the other shrines, Bárabakunda is a volcanic well. It is about three miles' journey southwards from the Sitakund village, and is situated in the same range of hills. Báraba fire, according to ancient mythology,\* originated from the anger of the Muni *Aurva*, whose mother's womb was about to be ripped open by the Kshatriyas. It was deposited in the bed of the sea, to prevent it from burning the three worlds. It is stated in the *Varahi Tantra* that Baraba is the veritable fire which sprang from the third eye of Siva and destroyed Káma, and that it is to burn down the three worlds at the final annihilation. The same Tantra also relates that the spring is four cubits square, with tepid water, and that at the

\* ततस्तं क्रोधसङ्घातं वौर्ब्बोऽग्निं वदणालये ।  
उत्पुर्जं स चैवाप उपयुक्ते महोदधौ ॥ ११ ॥  
महङ्गयश्शिरो भूत्वा यद्वैदविदा विदुः ।  
तमग्निमुक्तिरद्वक्तात् पिवत्यापो महोदधौ ॥ १२ ॥  
इति श्रीमहाभारते आदिपर्वणि चैत्ररथपर्वणौ-

वौर्ब्बानेऽश्रीत्यधिकशततमोऽध्यायः ।  
इयश्शिरः = वडवामुखम् । इति भारतभावदीपाल्यभारतटीकायां नौलकण्ठः ।  
+ शेगनेचान्तसङ्घातो जलमध्ये च दुर्बैचः ।  
कामो भक्त च संबीतो येन नेचाग्निना पुरा ॥  
चिलोकं दद्धते येन समुद्रस्त्रैव पूष्टते ।  
यग्नाने दद्धते तेन ब्रह्माण्डं सचराचरम् ॥  
वाराञ्छाम् सप्तमः पटसः ।

fire consists of seven flames.\* The following account of the spring is given by Lord Teignmouth :† “ The burning well is situated about twenty-two miles from Chatigan, at the termination of a valley surrounded by hills. I visited it in 1778, and, from *recollection*, am enabled to give the following account of it:—the shape of the well, or rather reservoir, is oblong, about six feet by four, and the depth does not exceed twelve feet. The water, which is always cold, is supplied by a spring, and there is a conduit for carrying off the superfluity; a part of the surface of the well, about a fourth, is covered with brick-work, which is nearly ignited by the flames, which flash without intermission from the surface of the water. It would appear that an inflammable vapour escapes through the water, which takes fire on contact with the external air; the perpetuity of the flame is occasioned by the ignited brick-work as, without this, much of the vapour would escape without conflagration. This was proved by taking away the covering of brick-work after the extinction of the heat, by throwing upon it the water of

\* तस्य दक्षिणतो देवि कुण्डं वाङ्वसंजकम् ।  
 क्रोधान्ते विद्यते कुण्डं चतुर्वृक्षं सुशोभनम् ॥  
 सप्तजिकाद्यको वक्तिः सुक्तिकेवरसन्निधौ ।  
 तज्जलमौपदुष्यात् तत्त्वाग्निः शिवरूपिणः (?) ॥  
 वाराह्याम् सप्तमः पट्टः ।

† Lord Teignmouth's Memoirs of Sir William Jones, p. 55.

the well. The flames still continued to burst forth from the surface, but with momentary intermissions and the vapour was always immediately kindled by holding a candle at a small distance from the surface of the water. A piece of silver placed in the conduit for carrying off the superfluous water, was discoloured in a few minutes, and an infusion of tea gave a dark tinge to the water."

Compare with the above, Captain Pogson's description of the spring—"In front is a building about thirty feet square, over the spring; the descent to it, by a flight of steps, is about fifteen feet; the rising heat was like that of a hot bath. Flames, in successive flashes, were playing on the surface of the water, which, from a column of perpetually rising bubbles, appeared to be boiling. The air they contained, ignited as it came in contact with an oven-like furnace, which the flames fed, and rendered, on one side red-hot. The heat of this self-ignited furnace rendered the surface of the water tepid, but it is naturally cold. In order to condense, and thereby perpetuate, the flames, about one-half of the spring is built over, with an aperture in the centre of the arch, through which, looking from the terrace above, the flames are seen playing on the water. Persons bathing, took in their hands and on their clothes the water with the flame burning on it. The uncovered part is a square of less than five feet, and the covered part about the same di-

mensions. The water is brackish, sulphureous, and chalybeate. A servant drank as much of it as he could hold in both hands united, twice filled, and was so severely purged, that he remained behind, and laid down until its effects went off ..... The water of the Balwa koond has an exhilarating effect, occasions a slight headache, and a sensation of fulness, which soon go off. Its effects are diuretic, slightly aperient, and creative of hunger."\*

The well outside the Kunda, formed by water issuing from the spring, is called *Básikunda*. Here the devotee first bathes and purifies himself. He then bathes in the Bárabakunda itself inside, and offers *bel* leaves and flowers to the flames to appease the burning god. It is said that at each offer of the *bel* leaves and flowers, the god roars louder to express his satisfaction. Close by are *Dadhikhairava*; the temple of *Jvalakálí*; and the spring of *Kumári*.

At a nearly similar distance and similarly situated is *Lavanákhya*, the Nuolukka of Captain Pogson and the Naldala Khya of Statistical Report of 1868-9, which differs from Barabakunda in the weakness of its flame and in the increased saltiness of its water. The salt-water is used for cooking purposes, though it is said that the salt cannot be eliminated from the water. A tradition prevails that this was tested

\* Captain Pogson's Narrative during a Tour to Chattegaon, p. 203.

by Mr. Harvey\* when he was Collector of Chittagong, and that he accordingly discharged some persons arrested for illicit manufacture of salt. The water, it is said, cures goitre. Around Lavanákhya are the following: *Dadhikunda*, a small well fed by the stream issuing from Lavanákhya; *Guru-dhvani*, another Jyotirmaya; *Brahma Kunda*, a hot spring on the top of a small hill, east of Lavanákhya; *Suryakunda*, a phenomenon similar to Lavanákhya and Bárabakunda.† Near Lavanákhya a place is shown as where the right arm of Sati, the consort of Siva, fell, cut by the discus of Vishnu. But no idol is seen there, and it is not held in the same veneration as Kálighat, Kámákhya, and similar places.

Dr. Oldham thus epitomizes Captain Pogson: "There are seven other springs within a circle of

\* Mr. John Inglis Harvey was Collector of Chittagong from 1831 to 1837, with short intermissions, during which he acted as Commissioner of the Division. *Vide* Mr. Cotton's Memorandum on the Revenue History of Chittagong, pp. 118-121.

† There are Mohuntas at the temple of Sambhunath, Bárabakunda, and Lavanákhya. Of those, the Mohunta of Sambhunath is the richest and the most well-known. He is generally called the Mohunta of Sitakund. The present Mohunta of Sitakund, whose name is Kis, or Ban, is a young gentleman of excellent manners, and of good education. He is also the Mohunta of Adinath, in the island of Moiscal. Of this god the same story is told as of that at Vaidyanath, near Dooghur. The Mohuntas have to take a vow of celibacy, and are succeeded by their principal disciples.

six miles, called Nuolukka (Lavanákhya), Kooaree (Kumári Kund), Dadhee (Dadhi), Burma (Brahma), Suruj (Súrya), Chandur (Chandra), and Seeta (Síta). Nuolukka is warm, vapour ignites on the application of flame, saline ; Kooaree is hot, saline, sulphureous, and chalybeate ; vapour ignites. Dadhee, water is cold, salt. Burma (Brahma ?) very hot and saltish, slightly chalybeate, vapour ignites. Chandur or Chander is on a hill, salt and exceedingly hot ('said to have appeared within the last four months') ignites ; Seeta is pure and limpid.\*"

From Lavanákhya the pilgrim proceeds to *Sahasradhárá*, a cataract. The water falls beautifully in thin streams, so as to form a natural shower-bath, from a height of about 400 feet. This is by far the most picturesque and romantic of all the various and wonderful sights of Sitakund. It is customary for pilgrims to stand under it. The water of *Sahasradhárá* is considered to be Siva himself. One cannot forget the bath at *Sahasradhárá*. It is said, that on the words "bom bom," which are peculiar to Siva, being pronounced, the water falls with gradually increasing force.

The places noted before are those generally visited by pilgrims. There are many others, for the *locale* of which the curious and the religious will refer to the *Váráhí Tantra*, the Bradshaw of the shrines of

\* Memoirs of the Geological Survey of India, Vol. XIX, Part II, p. 59.

Sitakund. From what has been said above, the reader who has had patience to follow us to the end of this book, will, it is trusted, be convinced of the recent character of these shrines. There is a sustained effort to plant on this place all the *tirthas* which are held in esteem by the Hindoos. For the most famous shrines of Benares, of Gaya, of Brindavan, of Puri, and other places, miniature *tirthas* are pointed out in Sitakund.\* The remarkable phenomena which nature presents in the place, have aided the fabrication of superstitious interpolations and forgeries. The sacred writings, which have been quoted before, bear evident indications of the alternate supremacy of the Sivaites and the Vishnuvites, and of the gradual multiplication of the shrines esteemed by each sect. But the belief in their sacredness is firm, deep-rooted, and universal. A man who holds a different opinion, is looked upon as irreligious and sacrilegious, even in Chittagong, where Hindooism is at a discount. Whether on account of their recent establishment, or from any other cause, the shrines have not received attention at the hands of the antiquarian and the sci-

\* There seems to be no end of places called Sitakund. In p. 23 *ante* and footnote, it has already been stated that there are three more Sitakunds, besides the Sitakund in Chittagong, viz., those at Monghyr, Kolat, and Ceylon. In pages 22 and 85 of Vol. XVI of Cunningham's Archaeological Report, there is mention of another Sitakund situate on the River Gandak in Tirhut.

tist. In these pages they have been described by a layman. But the antiquarian and the scientist will be able to ascertain the time when these shrines were first established, and how they gradually expanded. They will be able to ascertain the effect of the waters of the several springs, and analyze the medicinal virtues, which they are believed to possess. They will be able to ascertain the extent of the Hindoo occupation of the district, and of its conquest by the king of Tipperah. They will, in short, be able to complete the ancient history of Chittagong, which is now so meagre and unsatisfactory.

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